/250 cont./

823 771 There one touches on a plane more archaic and more profound than that of personifications. Behind the silhouettes of saints and under them one perceives a whole web of relations between the man or, rather, between the group and a sacred of agricultural efficiency entirely destitute of figure. And it is this layer which is the most important in mass as it probably is in authenticity.

82 782 Not only the water of irrigation, but the benevolent rain and, inversely, the devastating hurricane and the flood, the health and the sickness of plants, of beasts, and of men are subject to powers, most often without a name. The force released by the oath, if in the least it be taken in certain redoubtable places, or at the critical epoch which precedes ddabaran, "Aldebaran," turns against the crops of the canton, without there being any question of retribution or of moral judgment. But there are accommodations, and not only by an offering to the patron saints 823 or propitiatory and piacular rites, but by guile. It is thus that 782 the favor of the water chooses the valley of Wanz'id' or that of Iguntar, depending on the alacrity with which one or the other of these two villages honors the unnamed saint of Tamd'a Ugenni. But it suffices, let us say, "to fix a date" with him by depositing a hoe upon his sanctuary, and the trick will be played: one will have reconciled pious eagerness and wise economy. Elsewhere 778 the guile will be close to swindling. Thus with this miraculous 823 stone from which a spring is said to have gushed forth and which a passing holy man is said to have left to the village of Agawz. A citizen of Tuz'z'umt patriotically stole it, and that is why there is now a spring for each of the two villages (1).

1. The "theft" of the stone doubtlessly constitutes a reinterpretation. The rite of Wanz'id' is probably more intact. Agrarian magic, juridical separation, and group rivalry are revealed here in an instructive fashion.